



Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

An Internationally Accredited Public Safety Agency

NEWS RELEASE

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Emergency Medical Services Revenue Recovery Plan

Directly Supports Emergency Service Delivery

'EMS fee' reimbursement will improve services - save lives!

NO cost to County residents

Montgomery County Fire Chief Richard Bowers and the men and women of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service continue to support a proposal for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transport billing and revenue recovery. The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is committed to providing a cost effective and efficient public service for emergency medical services and other life-safety services furnished to our communities.

While this revenue recovery plan, which is more commonly known as the EMS transport fee, would be new to Montgomery County, nearly every other jurisdiction in the Washington and Baltimore region are reimbursed for ambulance transport services. Locally, the District of Columbia, City of Baltimore, Prince George's County, Frederick County, Fairfax County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria, to name a few, impose this charge as a form of revenue recovery.

In Montgomery County there will be NO change in current EMS service delivery and therefore, there should be NO reluctance to call 911 for any reason.

2 – EMS Fee

No one will ever be denied service based on ability to pay or whether they have health insurance. Again, there will be no change in current EMS service delivery or response. There will be no cost to County residents.

In fact, most residents of Montgomery County have health insurance and ambulance transport coverage is a standard covered service. Indeed, those patients have already paid for this coverage in their health insurance premiums.

Insurance companies recognize that ambulance transportation is a normal cost of patient care during medical emergency situations. In other words if you are insured, the fee will be charged directly to your insurance company, making this proposal simply a seamless revenue recovery process. If a resident is uninsured and requires medical transport, they will be transported at no charge and will not be billed.

The County plan for emergency medical transport billing and revenue recovery is organized in a way to minimize the impact on Montgomery County residents. Patient's insurance companies will be billed directly for ambulance transport services. The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service has been very clear in its determination to ensure that public welfare is maintained and reinforced with this new proposal.

Whenever a 911 call is made for help, the first priority will always be to take care of that patient's immediate medical needs. If and when deemed necessary the patient will be transported to the hospital similar to how it is handled now. If no transport is made, the EMS fee will not be charged to the insurance company. Again, there will no change in current EMS service delivery.

3 – EMS Fee

The revenue from the proposed fee has the potential to keep the world class Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service robust. Fire Chief Bowers believes that it is critically important to move forward with this proposal especially in these challenging fiscal times since the revenue recovery will net more than \$14 million a year. This revenue will be dedicated to maintain, augment and substantiate our first-class emergency fire and rescue services.

The funds will directly assist the combined (career and volunteer) Fire and Rescue Service to meet the demands for fire apparatus and equipment, including the acquisition of thirty new EMS units that are in immediate need of replacement as well as associated maintenance and replacement costs; provide critical infrastructure elements with additional fire-rescue stations and staffing in the growing Upcounty areas; career and volunteer staff and administrative support services as well as incentives for county-wide volunteer opportunities; four-person staffing of response equipment; and compensation and benefits for firefighters and emergency medical technicians, among other things will all be supported by the new revenue recovery process.

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is a full spectrum life safety agency protecting nearly 1 million people who live and work in Maryland's most populous jurisdiction. The MCFRS is a combination system (career/volunteer) made up of over 2,000 members comprised of over 1200 career uniformed personnel and professional civilian staff, over 1,000 of whom are emergency responders and an equal number of volunteers, nearly half of whom actively participate in emergency response. Operating with a budget of about \$190 million, there are forty fire and rescue facilities, including a 56 acre training academy, state-of-the-art communication facility, as well as thirty-five community fire and rescue stations strategically located throughout Montgomery County's 500 square miles in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.